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SUBJECT: SITUATION REPORT FROM NORTH DARFUR

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Summary

¶1. From July 12 to July 22, the USAID Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) Humanitarian Protection and Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) Advisor provided field officer coverage in El Fasher, North Darfur. Intra-Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) fighting, an increase in numbers of new IDPs, and additional attacks against international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) were the major issues observed during this period. Amidst the volatile and unpredictable security situation in North Darfur, USAID/OFDA implementing partners continue to respond to beneficiaries' humanitarian needs in a timely and efficient manner. End summary.

Intra-SLA Fighting Causes New Displacements

¶2. From July 12 to July 22, the USAID/OFDA Protection Advisor traveled to El Fasher, North Darfur to provide field coverage and support. The USAID/OFDA Protection Advisor remained in El Fasher and visited area camps Al Salaam and Zam Zam. In El Fasher, the USAID/OFDA Protection Advisor also met with USAID/OFDA implementing partners, representatives from the U.N. Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), and the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

¶3. Increased violence and inter-fighting between SLA/Minni Minawi (SLA/MM) and SLA/Abdel Wahid al Nur (SLA/AW) forces in the areas surrounding Tawila and Korma caused the displacement of civilians to the camps surrounding El Fasher. As of July 26, OCHA estimated that between 18,000 and 20,000 people had been displaced in these areas. OCHA did not have an estimate on the number of potential IDPs that are not in camps and have scattered around the Tawila and Korma areas. On a positive note, OCHA indicated that the humanitarian response to this large displacement has been efficient.

¶4. OCHA and UNMIS-Human Rights (UNMIS-HR) reported that SLA/MM forces have engaged in indiscriminate attacks, killings, and looting of civilians who are attempting to flee the violence. In mid July, OCHA, UNMIS-HR, UNMIS-Protection, and the U.N. Department of Safety

and Security (UNDSS) conducted an inter-agency assessment mission to the Korma area to further investigate these allegations. On July 18, the USAID/OFDA Protection Advisor met with UNMIS-HR and obtained additional details and confirmation of the attacks committed by SLA/MM forces around the Korma area between July 5 and 7.

¶15. The attacks led by SLA/MM forces in villages surrounding Korma led to the deaths 56 men. This death toll was confirmed by UNMIS-HR, based on the consistent accounts from surviving villagers and from the newly displaced people interviewed in the camps around the El Fasher area. In addition, UNMIS-HR visited the grave sites and has a list of the victims' names.

¶16. The focal point of the killings occurred in the Daljil village area, where UNMIS-HR confirmed that 48 males were killed (11 were students and under the age of 18), and another 12 adult men were wounded. UNMIS-HR described the villagers as unarmed civilians, and characterized the attack on Daljil as a massacre carried out by SLA/MM forces. UNMIS-HR stated that SLA/MM forces described the incident as a battle against SLA/AW militants, and there was an exchange of fire. According to the IDPs and villagers, there were no reports of an exchange of fire. Villagers and IDPs stated that they were "under the control of SLA/AW forces," but they were not combatants. The villagers who remain in the area currently have restricted freedom of movement, as SLA/MM forces are preventing them from traveling outside their villages. UNMIS-HR highlighted that Shoba village is currently uninhabited, while Daljil village has some people remaining in it.

¶17. Thus far, it appears that sexual violence against women did not play a central role in these attacks. Although UNMIS-HR has received some allegations regarding this issue, to date, they have been unable to confirm any cases. According to the Sheik of Daljil village, the women remained in their homes while the men fled. In some of the attacks, women and men have been whipped. UNMIS-HR will continue to follow this issue.

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INGOs Face Increased Security Challenges

¶18. USAID/OFDA partners International Rescue Committee, Relief International (RI), GOAL, and CHF International, as well as other INGOs operating in North Darfur, are increasingly faced with real threats of banditry and carjackings. RI reported that on July 12 one of their national staff members was fatally shot on the Kabkabiya/Al Shireaf road by three bandits, in what was reported as a carjacking gone awry. There are unconfirmed rumors that the incident was ethnically motivated. RI has temporarily suspended activities in the area, and a police investigation is on-going. On July 14, UNDSS reported that it evacuated seven NGO workers (MSF-Belgium and RI staff) from Saraf Omra after MSF-Belgium's compound was raided by three armed men who attempted to steal three vehicles. The armed men successfully stole one vehicle, but no one was injured during the robbery. RI and MSF-Belgium temporarily suspended activities in the area. According to OCHA, the evacuation was conducted in an efficient and timely manner.

¶19. According to the USAID/OFDA Protection Advisor, the general feeling among INGOs facing these security incidents is that they were not specifically targeted; rather, these incidents were acts of opportunity aimed at acquiring vehicles. UNDSS continues to monitor the situation and remains in close coordination with all INGOs in the area.

Humanitarian Response to Influx of IDPs

¶10. The USAID/OFDA Protection Advisor observed that OCHA coordinated the humanitarian response to the new influx of IDPs in the camps surrounding El Fasher in an organized and efficient manner. OCHA is concerned that there are a large number of IDPs that have scattered into rural areas or villages in the Korma and

Kassam Tunjur area. The displacement picture is much larger than that illustrated by the camp arrivals. Many IDPs are either unable to reach camps or have sought refuge with family members in remote villages. The challenge for the humanitarian community is to access these areas. UNDSS is evaluating travel conditions to affected areas.

¶11. OCHA reported that the humanitarian assistance response in camps has been well organized, and supplies are available. Notably, IDPs arriving at Zam Zam camp and Tawila have been arriving with some food stocks and household materials. Few emergency food rations have been required, non-food item (NFI) stocks are not strained, and the food aid pipeline problems have been resolved, with IDPs receiving full rations. However, IDPs arriving at Al Salaam camp have fewer possessions or assets.

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